



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# **Cyberbullying: An analysis of data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey for England, 2014**

## About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner.

Public Health England  
Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London SE1 8UG  
Tel: 020 7654 8000  
[www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)  
Twitter: [@PHE\\_uk](https://twitter.com/PHE_uk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](https://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland)

This briefing was written for PHE by the HBSC England Team; Professor Fiona Brooks, Kayleigh Chester, Dr Ellen Klemra and Dr Josefine Magnusson.

© Crown copyright 2017

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit [OGL](https://www.ogcl.gov.uk) or email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk). Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Published June 2017

PHE publications gateway number: 2016713



# Contents

About Public Health England	2
Executive summary	4
Introduction	6
Key findings	8
Conclusion	20
Resources and further information	21
Appendices	25
References	27

## Executive summary

This report summarises data on cyberbullying informed by an analysis of data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study for England, 2014.<sup>1</sup> The data draws on responses from 5,335 students aged 11-15 years who completed the HBSC survey in England.

This thematic report presents data from the most recent survey and illustrates associations between cyberbullying and demographics and social context. Relationships of importance and relevance which demonstrate considerable differences have been reported – guided by previous work on HBSC which has mapped protective factors across individual, family, school and local community domains.

This report is one of a series of three, the others covering self-harm and the wellbeing of adolescent girls.

This report is intended for a range of audiences interested in promoting children and young people's mental wellbeing, including for example local public health specialists, school nurses, head teachers and college principals, CCG leads, local councillors, CAMHS leads, mental health strategic clinical networks and local children and young people's mental health commissioners.

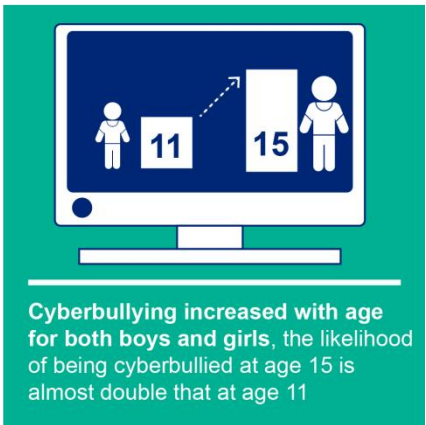
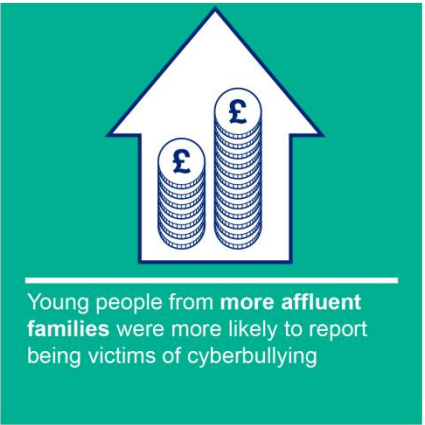
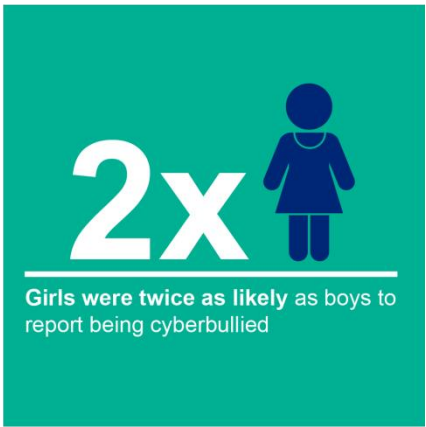
### Key points:

- in the 2014 HBSC study, 17.9% of 11-15 year olds reported being cyberbullied in the two months prior to being surveyed (Table 1)
- girls were twice as likely as boys to report being cyberbullied (Table 3)
- cyberbullying increased with age for both boys and girls; the reported prevalence rates of cyberbullying at age 15 were almost double those for 11 year olds (Table 1)
- cyberbullying is associated with socio-economic status. Young people from more affluent families were more likely to report being victims of cyberbullying (Table 4)
- young people who reported positive family communication, especially with a father, were less likely to experience cyberbullying (Table 7, Table 8)
- positive perceptions of the school environment were associated with lower levels of cyberbullying (Table 11)
- cyberbullying was associated with feelings of safety in young people's local neighbourhood (Table 13)

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the HBSC study see Appendix 1

## Cyberbullying:key stats



Referenced from the Health Behaviour in School Age Children survey <http://www.hbscengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/National-Report-2015.pdf>

# Introduction

Cyberbullying can be defined as a form of bullying which is carried out using electronic communication, including through the internet, social media and mobile phones.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of 12-15 year olds now have access to an internet enabled device, be that a smartphone or tablet,<sup>2</sup> and as these devices can be accessed 24/7 with a vast audience, the potential exists for cyberbullying to have a wider reach when compared with more traditional forms of bullying.

## Defining characteristics of cyberbullying

Bullying can be defined as intentional harmful behaviours carried out repeatedly over time, against an individual with less physical or psychological strength, who cannot defend themselves.<sup>3</sup> There are broadly four types of bullying: physical, verbal, relational and cyber.<sup>4</sup>

Cyberbullying can take the form of many behaviours including:

- harmful messages (text, instant, email)
- impersonating another person online
- sharing private messages
- uploading photographs or videos of another person that leads to shame and embarrassment
- creating hate websites/social media pages
- excluding people from online groups.

Traditional forms of bullying and cyberbullying are related, with very few victims of bullying subjected to cyberbullying alone.<sup>5</sup> However, research has shown cyberbullying to have effects on health outcomes independent of the effects of traditional bullying.<sup>5</sup> The widespread ownership of both mobile phones and internet enabled devices among 12-15 year olds (62% of 12-15 year olds in the UK have a smartphone, rising to 82% when including non-smartphone mobiles)<sup>2</sup> means that the opportunity for bullying to take place is not limited by geography, time, or face to face contact. It also widens the net of bystanders being able to view or participate in bullying more widely through online networks. The ease with which cyberbullying can occur in a way that is invisible to others, including supportive peers and adults in the child's life is another aspect that distinguishes it from more traditional forms of bullying. An EU-based study identified smartphones to be associated with more online activity but also fewer parental restrictions and regulation of use than older technologies such as watching TV.<sup>6</sup>

## Link between bullying and poor health outcomes

Longitudinal research has demonstrated the causal relationship between experiencing bullying and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, with potentially long term impacts into adulthood.<sup>7</sup> The negative effect of bullying has also been demonstrated among the perpetrators of bullying and not just the victims. Moreover, there is often an interaction between being bullied and bullying others; those who are both bullies and victims (bully/victims) are likely to display the worst health and social outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

## Data source - the HBSC study

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a unique cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. The study is carried out every four years in over 40 countries across Europe and North America allowing for trends in health and wellbeing to be examined.<sup>9</sup> It aims to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of the health and wellbeing and health behaviours of young people (aged 11, 13 and 15) as well as their social context. Further details about the HBSC study can be found in Appendix 1.

In 2013/14, 5,335 young people aged 11, 13, and 15 years participated in the survey in England; with results published in October 2015.<sup>2</sup> Time trends in adolescent health and health behaviours in England can be calculated since 2002. This report presents data from the most recent HBSC survey conducted in England from the 2013/14 survey cycle.<sup>10</sup> Young people were asked about both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Details of the measures used and methodology can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

---

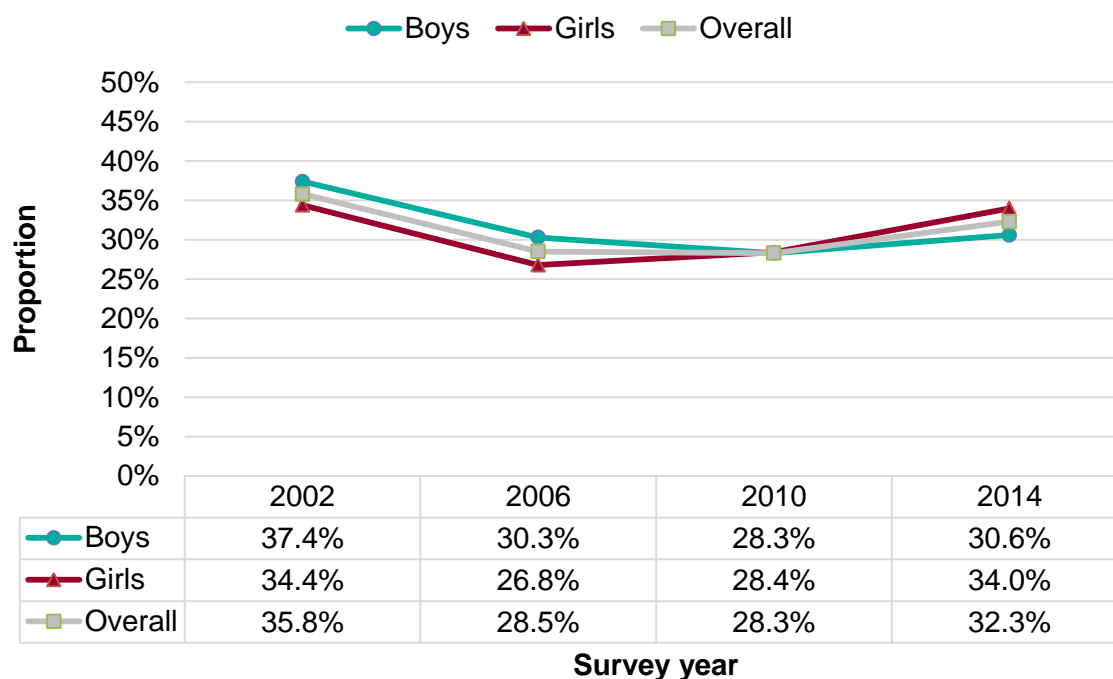
<sup>2</sup> The full report is available at: <http://www.hbsc.org/>

# Key findings

## Prevalence

The latest (2013/14) HBSC survey found that one in three 11-15 year olds in England had experienced what can be considered to be traditional forms of bullying via direct interpersonal interactions in the past two months (32.3%). Comparing this most recent data to previous years (Figure 1) reveals a slight increase in bullying reported by both boys and girls since 2010, although it is too early to determine if this is an emerging trend.

**Figure 1. Proportion of 11-15 year olds in England reporting traditional bullying, 2002-2014**



Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey

Young people<sup>3</sup> were asked how often they had experienced two forms of cyberbullying in the past two months (see Box 2, Appendix 2): cyberbullying via written text (for example, mean instant messages and wall posting) and cyberbullying through photographs (such as uploading inappropriate/unflattering photos without victim's consent).

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the report tables and figures 'young people' refers to those aged 11, 13 and 15 as surveyed in the HBSC study.



Overall, 17.9% of young people reported they had experienced some form of cyberbullying in the past two months (Table 1). Receiving mean messages (including text, instant message, email) was slightly more common than being cyberbullied through images: 12.7% compared with 10%. Among those who were cyberbullied, the majority reported they were targeted by only one form, either messages (44.9%) or pictures (30.2%), with 24.9% experiencing both forms of cyberbullying.

The HBSC survey cannot identify trends in cyberbullying as it was measured for the first time in 2014.<sup>4</sup> However, the EU Kids Online study identified a moderate increase in cyberbullying among a similar age group: 8% in 2010 compared with 12% in 2014.<sup>11</sup>

## Individual factors

### Age

Cyberbullying, both through messages and images, was found to increase with age (Table 1). The likelihood of being cyberbullied at age 15 is almost double that at age 11.

**Table 1. Prevalence of cyberbullying in the previous two months, by age**

Cyberbullying by	Proportion of young people			Total
	11 year olds	13 year olds	15 year olds	
Messages	9.9%	13.1%	15.9%	<b>12.7%</b>
Images	5.8%	11.7%	13.6%	<b>10.0%</b>
Overall (messages & images)*	12.6%	19.3%	23.4%	<b>17.9%</b>

\* A proportion of young people report experiencing cyberbullying through both pictures and messages, thus overall cyberbullying is not equivalent to the sum of cyberbullying by messages and images.

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

Table 2 presents data comparing frequency of daily texting and computer use across 11, 13 and 15 year olds. Older adolescents were much more likely to report texting their friends frequently. Computer use of more than two hours a day, exceeding the Department of Health's recommended level of screen time,<sup>12</sup> also increased with age. As young people move into mid-adolescence their access to electronic media increases and becomes less restricted, with more private use of the internet (such as in own bedrooms or public spaces on handheld devices) likely resulting in less parental surveillance of leisure activities and monitoring of screen time.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, young people's online activities shift with age, moving towards increasing use of electronic media for communication purposes with wider groups of peers and an increasing range

<sup>4</sup> the scope of the survey did not explore the potential positive opportunities social media provides for enhancing mental literacy

of online communication tools such as instant messaging and social networking sites. All of these may increase the risk and exposure to being cyberbullied.

**Table 2. Electronic media use by age**

Media use	Proportion of young people			Total
	11 year olds	13 year olds	15 year olds	
Texting friends daily	39.9%	53.3%	60.8%	<b>50.5%</b>
More than 2 hours computer use on weekdays	25.7%	44.7%	52.7%	<b>40.1%</b>

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Gender

Girls were more than twice as likely to report being a victim of cyberbullying than boys (24.2% and 11.9% respectively;

Table 3). A similar gender pattern among 15 year olds was identified in the What about YOUTH? study for England,<sup>14</sup> with 19% of girls reporting cyberbullying compared with 10% of boys.

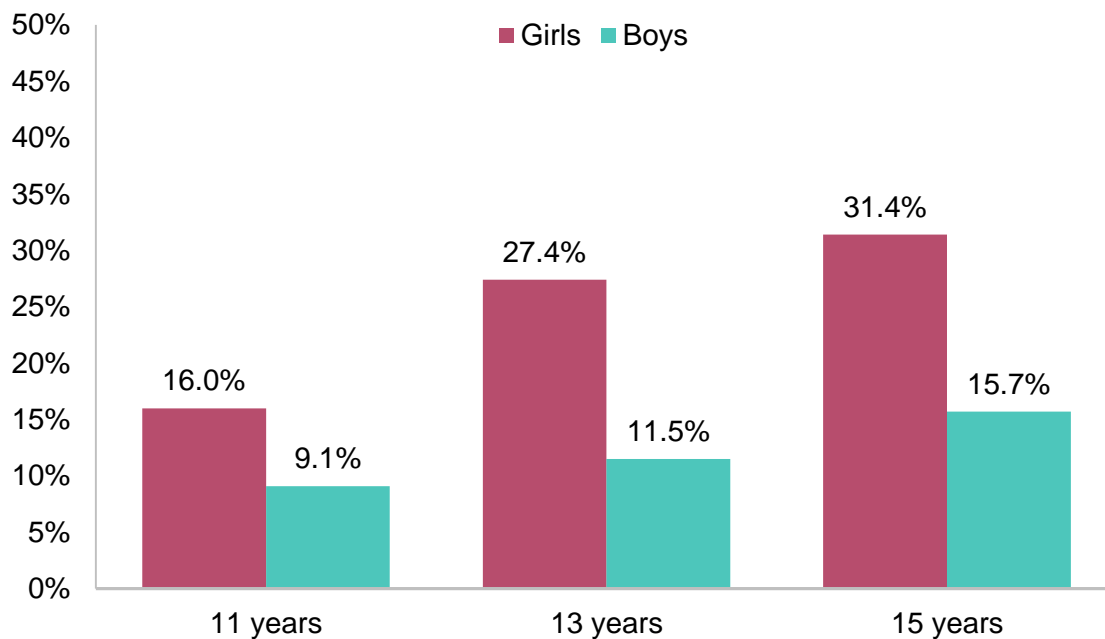
**Table 3. Prevalence of cyberbullying in the previous two months, by gender**

Cyberbullied by	Proportions of young people		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Messages	8.5%	17.0%	<b>12.7%</b>
Images	6.6%	13.4%	<b>10.0%</b>
Overall (messages & images)	11.9%	24.2%	<b>17.9%</b>

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

Figure 2 illustrates overall cyberbullying by both age and gender. Across all age categories, girls were more likely to report being a victim of cyberbullying, however being a victim of cyberbullying increased with age for both sexes.

**Figure 2. Proportion of young people experiencing cyberbullying in previous two months, by age and gender**



Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Social inequalities

The likelihood of being a victim of cyberbullying varied by socio-economic status (SES), as measured by the HBSC Family Affluence Scale (FAS)<sup>5</sup> and free school meal eligibility. Overall, cyberbullying appeared to increase with family affluence; young people who reported high family affluence were most likely to say they had been cyberbullied in the previous two months (Table 4). Similarly, those young people receiving free school meals were slightly less likely to report being a victim of cyberbullying (Table 5).

**Table 4. Prevalence of cyberbullying in the previous two months, by Family Affluence Scale and Free School Meal eligibility\***

		Proportion of young people cyberbullied by		
		Messages	Images	Overall (messages & images)
Family Affluence scale (FAS)	Low	13.7%	8.9%	16.5%
	Medium	11.9%	9.7%	17.6%
	High	14.0%	12.1%	20.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>
Free school meals	Receiving	13.1%	8.4%	16.4%
	Not receiving	12.6%	10.2%	18.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

Comparison of cyberbullying and traditional bullying by FAS illustrates a contrasting pattern of responses. Unlike cyberbullying, traditional bullying behaviours are most common among young people who report low FAS (Table 5).

**Table 5. Prevalence of traditional bullying in the previous two months, by Family Affluence Scale**

	Family Affluence Scale			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Proportions of young people who experienced traditional bullying	37.0%	30.3%	34.1%	<b>32.4%</b>

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

It has often been assumed that young people from high socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to have access to the internet.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, young people from wealthy families are more likely to access the internet via handheld devices and in their own

<sup>5</sup> FAS is a proxy measure of SES suitable for young people. It assesses family wealth via six items measuring the number of cars, holidays, PCs, bedrooms and bathrooms in a household, as well as dishwasher ownership. FAS generates an overall score and categorises young people into low, medium and high FAS.

room which may result in more unsupervised internet activities.<sup>13</sup> The association between SES and cyberbullying may be explained by the increase of access to electronic media through which cyberbullying is conducted; the data from HBSC England supports this in part (Table 6). Young people with high family affluence were considerably more likely to have daily contact with friends through texting, however computer use did not vary by family affluence. If the link between SES and cyberbullying is determined primarily from increased ownership of electronic media tools, we can expect to see the association between family affluence and cyberbullying diminish as technology becomes more widely available. The 2013 Ofcom report<sup>2</sup> illustrated that the technology gap between socio-economic groups was narrowing.

**Table 6. Electronic media use, by Family Affluence Scale**

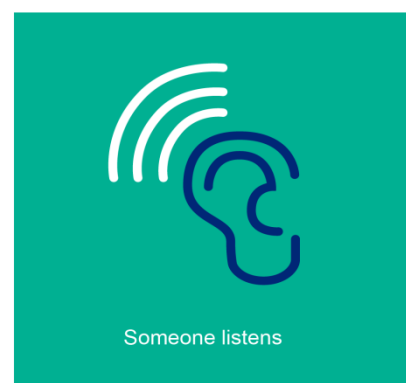
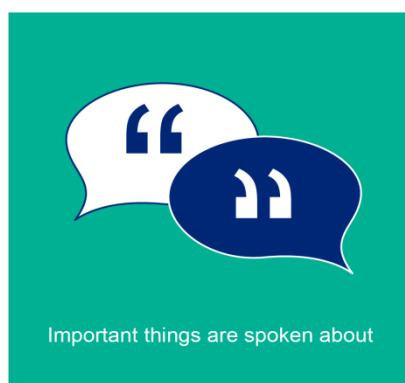
Electronic media use	Family Affluence Scale			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Texting friends daily	40.4%	51.5%	58.1%	<b>51.1%</b>
More than 2 hours computer use on weekdays	41.0%	40.4%	39.3%	<b>40.2%</b>

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Family

Positive family relationships have been found to be associated with the health and wellbeing of young people,<sup>16</sup> with the quality of family communication in particular being an important protective factor during adolescence. Young people who have good quality communication with their parents are likely to have better health and social outcomes and be better equipped to navigate adolescence and early adulthood.<sup>17</sup> The 2014 HBSC England study asked young people about family dynamics, including how easy it is to communicate with their parents. Importantly, family communication appears to have a potential link with bullying victimisation as young people who report they could easily talk to both their parents were less likely to be a victim of cyberbullying compared with those who said it was more difficult to talk to their parents (Table 7 and Table 8). A study by Chester et al. (2016) identified that fathering may play a distinct role in protecting young people against cyberbullying; those reporting easy communication with their father have statistically lower odds of being cyberbullied than peers who report it is difficult to talk to their father.<sup>18</sup>

## Protective factors: family



Young people who felt the important things were spoken about in their family and that someone listened to them when they spoke were less likely to say they have experienced cyberbullying in the past two months (Table 9).

**Table 7. Communication with father by cyberbullying involvement\***

Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people who find communication with father		Total
	Easy	Difficult	
Messages	9.2%	20.4%	12.4%
Images	7.9%	14.8%	9.8%
Overall (messages & images)	14.0%	27.0%	17.7%

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses  
Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

**Table 8. Communication with mother by cyberbullying involvement\***

Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people who find communication with mother		Total
	Easy	Difficult	
Messages	11.0%	21.6%	12.6%
Images	8.7%	15.2%	9.7%
Overall (messages & images)	16.0%	27.2%	17.7%

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses  
Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

**Table 9. Perception of family communication by cyberbullying involvement\***

Family communication	Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people			
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Total
<b>In my family, I think the important things are talked about</b>	Messages	10.3%	17.5%	28.7%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.4%	13.4%	18.7%	<b>9.9%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	15.2%	23.5%	35.2%	<b>17.9%</b>
<b>In my family, when I speak someone listens to what I say</b>	Messages	10.0%	18.6%	28.0%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.3%	13.1%	19.6%	<b>9.9%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.8%	24.7%	35.3%	<b>17.9%</b>

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England <sup>10</sup>

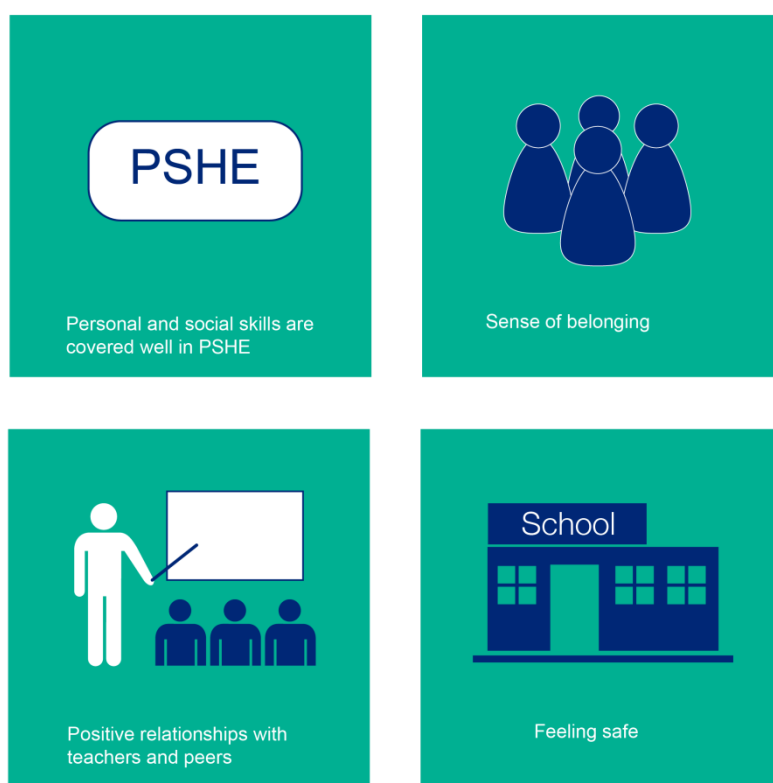
## School

A supportive school culture and ethos has been associated with positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people.<sup>19,20</sup> School culture is created and reinforced via a range of factors including how much students feel connected to their school and their relationships with their teachers. In particular, students overall sense of belonging to their school and their perception of safety within their school appear to be important factors associated with levels of bullying, including cyberbullying.

The HBSC England data on the school environment allows for comparisons across levels of cyberbullying involvement (Table 10). Overall, young people who disagreed with the statements addressing aspects of the school environment (including safety, belonging, care and trust) were more likely to be a victim of cyberbullying than those who agreed with the statement. The largest difference concerned feeling safe, with a difference of 30 percentage points noted between those who agree they feel safe at school and those who disagree.

Peers are also an important element of the school environment. Analysis of data from the HBSC England survey demonstrates lower levels of cyberbullying among young people who held positive perceptions about their peer relationships at school (Table 11).

## Protective factors: learning environment



**Table 10. Perception of school environment by cyberbullying involvement\***

School environment	Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people who			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
<b>"I feel safe in this school"</b>	Messages	10.0%	21.1%	38.7%	<b>12.8%</b>
	Images	8.8%	13.1%	23.2%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	15.1%	26.6%	45.7%	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>"I feel like I belong in this school"</b>	Messages	9.6%	17.8%	31.7%	<b>12.8%</b>
	Images	8.3%	12.2%	20.7%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.5%	23.8%	38.0%	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>"I feel that my teachers care about me as a person"</b>	Messages	10.5%	15.3%	26.5%	<b>12.8%</b>
	Images	8.0%	11.8%	22.6%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.7%	21.5%	37.4%	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>"I feel there is a lot of trust in my teachers"</b>	Messages	10.2%	14.0%	24.8%	<b>12.8%</b>
	Images	7.8%	11.8%	18.3%	<b>9.9%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.6%	20.3%	32.4%	<b>18.0%</b>

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses.

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>



**Table 11. Perception of peers by cyberbullying involvement\***

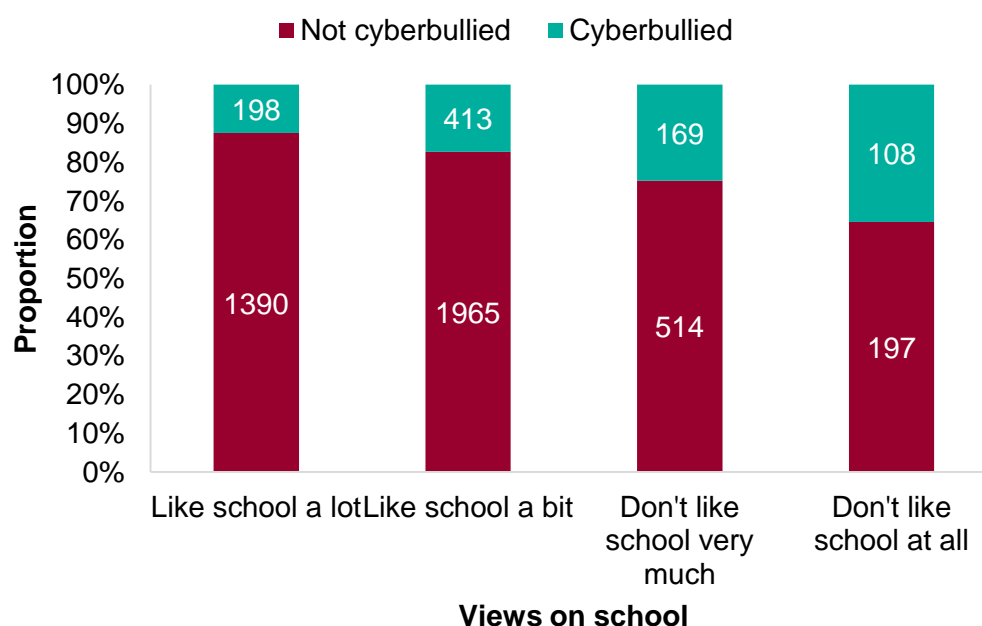
Perception of peers	Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people who			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
“Other students accept me as I am”	Messages	9.2%	16.8%	32.8%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.2%	11.8%	20.7%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	13.9%	23.6%	40.0%	<b>18.0%</b>
“The students in my class enjoy being together”	Messages	10.6%	15.0%	25.6%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.8%	11.3%	16.5%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	15.7%	20.7%	30.8%	<b>18.0%</b>
“Most of the students in my classes are kind and helpful”	Messages	9.5%	16.5%	26.2%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.1%	12.6%	16.9%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.1%	23.3%	32.3%	<b>17.9%</b>

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England <sup>10</sup>

The HBSC survey asks young people whether they like school. Students who were cyberbullied were more likely to hold negative views about school, with cyberbullied students making up a larger proportion of those who reported they “don’t like school at all” (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Cyberbullying and views about school**



Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>  
 Research conducted by Ofsted<sup>21</sup> evaluating effective strategies for tackling bullying in school, highlighted the role that personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education can play in creating a positive school environment and preventing bullying. Ofsted recommends PSHE education should address individual differences, is adaptable to bullying in the school and is linked across other subject areas.

A recent Cochrane Review<sup>22</sup> identified health promoting lessons such as PSHE education were associated with a reduction in students reporting bullying. The HBSC England study asks young people about the provision of PSHE education at their school, including their perception of how well PSHE lessons cover a number of topics outlined by Ofsted.<sup>23</sup> Of those who reported receiving PSHE education, a higher proportion of young people who said the topic of personal and social skills was poorly covered reported experiencing cyberbullying compared with those who felt the topic was well covered at school (Table 12). Examination of HBSC England data suggests PSHE education may function as a protective asset by fostering positive relationships within the school environment.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 12. Perception of PSHE education provision by cyberbullying involvement\***

Proportions of young people cyberbullied by	Personal and social skills covered...		Total
	...well in PSHE	...poorly in PSHE	
Messages	11.9%	16.0%	<b>13.4%</b>
Images	8.7%	13.6%	<b>10.5%</b>
Overall (messages & images)	16.7%	22.9%	<b>18.9%</b>

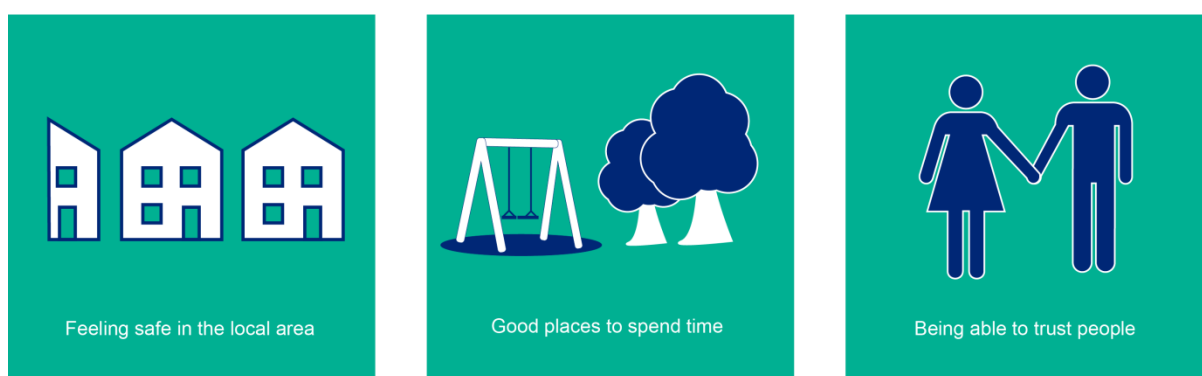
\*82% of the sample said they had attended PSHE lessons at school and were included in this analysis, and those who did not attend were excluded, thus total proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses. Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Local neighbourhood

Research has demonstrated that the community environment where young people live can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing,<sup>25</sup> especially as young people transition from childhood to more unsupervised time in their communities. The HBSC England study asks young people whether they agree or disagree with a number of statements about their neighbourhood. Young people with a positive perception of their neighbourhood were less likely to report being cyberbullied compared with those who held a negative opinion (Table 13). The largest difference relates to perception of safety, with a 16 percentage point difference between those who agreed they felt safe in the area they lived (15.6%) and those that did not (31.6%). Further analysis of HBSC England data identified young people who possessed a high sense of neighbourhood belonging were half as likely as those with low neighbourhood belonging to experience cyberbullying.<sup>18</sup>

All ecological environments (such as school, family and neighbourhood) of the young person intersect to influence young peoples' lives. For example, Ofsted<sup>21</sup> highlighted the importance of school, families, and the wider neighbourhood sharing a common approach on bullying as a key means to reduce bullying victimisation in schools, with very positive outcomes achieved when schools work closely with members of the community, including parents/carers.

## Protective factors: community



**Table 13. Perception of neighbourhood by cyberbullying involvement\***

	Cyberbullied by	Proportion of young people who			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
<b>"I feel safe in the area where I live"</b>	Messages	11.1%	17.0%	21.2%	<b>12.8%</b>
	Images	8.4%	13.9%	19.1%	<b>10.1%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	15.6%	23.7%	31.6%	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>"It is safe for younger children to play outside during the day"</b>	Messages	11.5%	14.3%	18.8%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	9.1%	10.6%	14.4%	<b>9.9%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	16.5%	19.0%	25.9%	<b>18.0%</b>
<b>"You can trust people around here"</b>	Messages	10.2%	14.5%	18.1%	<b>12.6%</b>
	Images	8.4%	11.3%	13.5%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	14.9%	20.4%	24.3%	<b>17.9%</b>
<b>"There are good places to spend your free time eg leisure centres, parks, shops"</b>	Messages	11.3%	12.1%	19.9%	<b>12.7%</b>
	Images	8.3%	11.3%	16.4%	<b>10.0%</b>
	Overall (messages & images)	15.6%	19.1%	27.5%	<b>18.0%</b>

\* Proportions of young people cyberbullied may vary compared with previous analyses due to missing responses

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England <sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

This report highlights key findings from the HBSC study carried out in England in 2013/14 in relation to cyberbullying. The report identifies that 17.9% of all young people surveyed aged 11-15 years had experienced cyberbullying in the two months before the survey. Girls appeared to be at a significantly greater risk of cyberbullying, as distinct from more traditional types of bullying, and the risk of being a victim of cyberbullying appears to increase with age for both boys and girls. The analysis also examined associations between cyberbullying and factors from different domains of the young person's life including the family, school and neighbourhood. The cross-sectional nature of the HBSC survey means we cannot assume cause and effect, however these analyses identify potentially protective factors from the key domains of young people's environment (family, school and neighbourhood) which need to be considered when developing strategies to prevent cyberbullying. The interaction between all three domains also needs to be considered, suggesting that multifactorial and multi-domain interventions could offer the most effective preventive or harm reduction strategies for cyberbullying.



## Resources and further information

### Public Health England (PHE)

Improving young people's health and wellbeing: A framework for public health

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/399391/20150128\\_YP\\_HW\\_Framework\\_FINAL\\_WP\\_3\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399391/20150128_YP_HW_Framework_FINAL_WP_3_.pdf)

Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges

[www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf](http://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf)

Children's and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Profiles: a data tool on risk, prevalence and the range of health, social care and education services that support children with, or vulnerable to, mental illness

[fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/cypmh](http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/cypmh)

Child and adolescent mental health services needs assessments and service snapshots for local authorities and CCGs

[atlas.chimat.org.uk/IAS/profiles/aboutdynamicreports](http://atlas.chimat.org.uk/IAS/profiles/aboutdynamicreports)

Protecting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach

[cypmhc.org.uk/sites/cypmhc.org.uk/files/Promoting%20CYP%20Emotional%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Whole%20School%20Approach.pdf](http://cypmhc.org.uk/sites/cypmhc.org.uk/files/Promoting%20CYP%20Emotional%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Whole%20School%20Approach.pdf)

Public Health England's National Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network produce a number of eBulletins on Child and Maternal Health which you can sign up to

[public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHPA/subscribers/new](http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHPA/subscribers/new)

### Rise Above

A digital hub for young people, to help delay or prevent them from risky behaviours and build resilience by driving conversations across multiple topics that matter to young people and sign post where and how they can get help

[www.riseabove.org.uk](http://www.riseabove.org.uk)

## Department for Education (DfE)

Longitudinal study of young people in England cohort 2: health and wellbeing at wave 2

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-young-people-in-england-cohort-2-wave-2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-young-people-in-england-cohort-2-wave-2)

Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444862/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444862/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

## The Children's Society

The good childhood report 2016

[www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/pcr090\\_mainreport\\_web.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/pcr090_mainreport_web.pdf)

## MindEd

MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for adults

[www.minded.org.uk/](http://www.minded.org.uk/)

## Association for Young People's Health

A public health approach to promoting young people's resilience: A guide to resources for policy makers, commissioners, and service planners and providers

[www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/resilience-resource-15-march-version.pdf](http://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/resilience-resource-15-march-version.pdf)

## Young Minds

Resources for children, young people, parents and professionals on emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people

[www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)

## National Children's Bureau

Gender and children and young people's emotional and mental health: manifestations and responses: A rapid review of the evidence

[www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20evidence%20review%20-%20gender%20and%20CYP%20mental%20health%20-2.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20evidence%20review%20-%20gender%20and%20CYP%20mental%20health%20-2.pdf)

## Anti-Bullying Alliance

The Anti-Bullying Alliance have a range of resources on the issue of cyberbullying

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/resources/cyberbullying/](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/resources/cyberbullying/)

## Tootoot

A safeguarding app providing 24 hour support to young people who are victims of bullying or online abuse, backed by government investment

[tootoot.co.uk/#safeguarding-made-simple](http://tootoot.co.uk/#safeguarding-made-simple)

[www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-children-to-benefit-from-anti-bullying-app](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-children-to-benefit-from-anti-bullying-app)

## Childnet

Cyberbullying guidance and practical online safety PSHE toolkit

[www.childnet.com/new-for-schools/cyberbullying-guidance-and-practical-toolkit](http://www.childnet.com/new-for-schools/cyberbullying-guidance-and-practical-toolkit)

## PSHE Association

Ten Questions about bullying. A resource to explore pupils' understanding of bullying and to share with them the most effective ways of responding to it

[www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/ten-questions-about-bullying](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/ten-questions-about-bullying)

## National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Share Aware Resources. Lesson plans and classroom guidance on online safety

[www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware-schools?dm\\_t=0,0,0,0,0](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware-schools?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0)

## Home Office

A guide for professionals who work with young people, to help them understand what constitutes abusive behaviour online, the consequences of that behaviour, and where they can get help

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-abuse-and-bullying-prevention-guide](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-abuse-and-bullying-prevention-guide)

## Childline

Cyberbullying definitions, resources and support for children and young people

[www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/online-bullying/](http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/online-bullying/)

## Mind

A guide on how to keep safe online and look after your wellbeing when using the internet for information or support for your mental health

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/online-safety-and-support/bullying-and-abuse/#.WI9jflWLTs1](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/online-safety-and-support/bullying-and-abuse/#.WI9jflWLTs1)

## National Crime Agency

Think u know. Education and reporting tool for parents and teachers to protect children from abuse online

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/)



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The HBSC study

HBSC is the longest running international study examining the health and wellbeing, health behaviours and social determinants of 11-15 year olds. HBSC is a survey-based study, with students completing surveys during class time. The survey is administered to a nationally representative sample of young people in each country. HBSC is repeated every four years allowing for temporal trends in young people's health and wellbeing to be examined.

The HBSC survey includes questions from different domains of a young person's life, for example; family communication, teacher relationships, perception of school environment and feelings of safety.

England has participated in the HBSC study since 1997. In 2013/14, a random sample of English secondary schools, stratified by region and school type (independent and state), resulted in a sample size of 5,335 students. The dataset was weighted to be representative of pupils in England, accounting for deviances in the sample compared with national census data.

For more information about the HBSC study see [www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org)

For more information about the HBSC study for England see

<http://www.hbsc.org/news/index.aspx?ni=3256>

## Appendix 2: Measures used to identify bullying

Box 1 illustrates the measure used to identify traditional forms of bullying, which is derived from the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire.<sup>26</sup> The HBSC study for England assessed cyberbullying prevalence for the first time in 2014 and the measure used is presented in Box 2.

### Box 1. Measurement tool to assess traditional bullying in the HBSC survey

**Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way.**

**How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?**

**I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months**

**It has happened once or twice**

**2 or 3 times a month**

**About once a week**

**Several times a week**

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Box 2. Measurement tool to assess cyberbullying in the HBSC survey

**How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in the following ways?**

	I have not been bullied in this way in the past couple of months	Once or twice	2 or 3 times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
Someone sent mean instant messages, wall posting, emails and text messages or created a website that made fun of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone took unflattering or inappropriate pictures of me without permission and posted them online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) 2014 survey for England<sup>10</sup>

## Appendix 3: Methodology

This report is informed by an analysis of data from the Health Behaviour in School Age Children Survey and through cross analysis of survey questions covering spanning individual, family, school and local community domains.

Further detail of the methodology for the HBSC study can be found in the England national reports <http://www.hbsc.org/news/index.aspx?ni=3256> and the full external protocol is available from [www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org). The HBSC data is hierarchical and students are nested within classes, within schools as such to account for the hierarchical data structure. Multilevel modelling is the most desirable method of analysis and the factsheets refer to existing multilevel modelling of the HBSC dataset when applicable, along with existing research in the field.

## References

1. Whittaker E, Kowalski RM. Cyberbullying via social media. *J Sch Violence*. 2015;14(1):11-29. doi:10.1080/15388220.2014.949377.
2. Ofcom. *Children and parents: Media use and attitudes report*; 2013. Available at: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf>.
3. Olweus D. School bullying: Development and some important challenges. *Annu Rev Clin Psychol*. 2013;9:751-80. doi:10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050212-185516.
4. Wang J, Iannotti RJ, Nansel TR. School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *J Adolesc Heal*. 2009;45(4):368-375. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.03.021.
5. Waasdorp TE, Bradshaw CP. The overlap between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. *J Adolesc Heal*. 2015;56(5):483-488. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.12.002.
6. Stald G, Green L, Barbovski M, et al. *Online on the mobile: Internet use on smartphones and associated risks among youth in Europe*. London; 2014. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU Kids III/Reports/MobileReport.pdf>.
7. Lereya ST, Copeland WE, Costello EJ, Wolke D. Adult mental health consequences of peer bullying and maltreatment in childhood: two cohorts in two countries. *The Lancet Psychiatry*. 2015;2(6):524-531. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(15)00165-0.
8. Wolke D, Copeland WE, Angold A, Costello EJ. Impact of bullying in childhood on adult health, wealth, crime, and social outcomes. *Psychol Sci*. 2013;24:1958-70. doi:10.1177/0956797613481608.
9. Inchley J, Currie D, Young T, et al., eds. *Growing up unequal: Gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being. Health behaviour in school-aged children (HBSC) study: International report from the 2013/2014 survey*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016.
10. Brooks F, Magnusson J, Klemara E, Chester K, Spencer N, Smeeton N. *HBSC England national report: Findings from the 2014 HBSC study for England*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire; 2015. Available at: <http://www.hbscengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/National-Report-2015.pdf>.
11. Livingstone S, Mascheroni G, Ólafsson K, Haddon L. *Children's online risks and opportunities: Comparative findings from EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile*. London: EU Kids Online, LSE; 2014.
12. Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum. *Report of the children and young people's health outcomes strategy*. London: Department of Health; 2012.
13. Livingstone S, Haddon L, Gorzig A, Ólafsson K. *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the UK report. Full findings from the EU Kids Online surveys of the UK 9-16 year olds and their parents*. London; 2010. Available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33730/1/EU\\_Kids\\_Online\\_Report\\_April2014.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33730/1/EU_Kids_Online_Report_April2014.pdf).
14. HSCIC. *Health and Wellbeing of 15 year olds in England: Findings from the What About*

- YOUth? Survey 2014*.; 2015. Available at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB19244/what-about-youth-eng-2014-rep.pdf>.
15. Chowdry H, Crawford C, Dearden L, et al. *Poorer children's educational attainment: How important are attitudes and behaviour?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2010.
  16. Public Health England. *How healthy behaviour supports children's wellbeing*.; 2013.
  17. Moreno C, Sánchez-Queija I, Muñoz-Tinoco V, et al. Cross-national associations between parent and peer communication and psychological complaints. *Int J Public Health*. 2009;54(Suppl 2):235-542. doi:10.1007/s00038-009-5415-7.
  18. Chester KL, Magnusson J, Klemmer E, Spencer NH, Brooks FM. The mitigating role of ecological health assets in adolescent cyberbullying victimization. *Youth Soc*. 2016. doi:10.1177/0044118X16673281.
  19. Brooks F. *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment. A briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in education settings*. London: Public Health England; 2014.
  20. Goldweber A, Waasdorp TE, Bradshaw CP. Examining the link between forms of bullying behaviors and perceptions of safety and belonging among secondary school students. *J Sch Psychol*. 2013;51(4):469-485. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2013.04.004.
  21. Ofsted. *No place for bullying*.; 2012. Available at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110179](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110179).
  22. Langford R, Bonell CP, Jones HE, et al. The WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2014;4:CD008958.
  23. Ofsted. *Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools*.; 2013.
  24. PSHE education, pupil wellbeing and safety at school. Association between PSHE lessons on personal and social skills and feelings of belonging and strong relationships at school - analysis by the University of Hertfordshire and the PSHE Association. 2016. Available at: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/evidence-briefing-pshe-education-pupil-wellbeing>.
  25. Brooks F, Magnusson J, Spencer N, Morgan A. Adolescent multiple risk behaviour: An asset approach to the role of family, school and community. *J Public Health (Bangkok)*. 2012;34(S1):48-56. doi:10.1093/pubmed/fds001.
  26. Olweus D. *The revised Olweus bully/victim questionnaire*. Norway: University of Bergen; 1996.